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# **Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE)**

## **Graduate Scholarships in Science and Technology (GraSST)**

### **GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

**February 2014**

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The Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) program is a five-year initiative by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to strengthen the research capacities of Philippine universities and industries in science, technology and innovation for higher economic growth in the country.

### **What is USAID STRIDE Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology (GraSST)?**

USAID STRIDE - GraSST is a merit-based, open, national competition scholarship program that gives Filipinos the opportunity to study at the graduate level in a U.S. university for one year. It is awarded to talented individuals who demonstrate the potential to be future leaders and decision-makers in the science and technology field, and to contribute towards an innovation-led economic development.

There are two types of USAID STRIDE GraSST:

1. **Professional Science Master's (PSM) Scholarship.** This enables Filipinos who are pursuing master's degrees in the fields of engineering, agriculture, computer science, and other science and technology – related disciplines in Philippine universities to supplement their degree with knowledge and training in management, entrepreneurship, communications and other professional skills valued by Philippine industries by taking PSM courses in U.S. universities for one academic year.
2. **PhD Dissertation Research “Sandwich” Scholarship.** This gives Filipino doctoral candidates in Philippine universities the opportunity to conduct dissertation research in a U.S. university for 12 months.

### **What fields of study does STRIDE-GraSST support?**

Generally, a USAID STRIDE-GraSST candidate can take courses or do research studies in the science and technology-related disciplines such as preferably but not limited to: manufacturing/engineering, electronics/semiconductor, health and medical, information and communications technology, energy, environment protection and preservation, aquatic/marine, food processing, crop production, and natural sciences.

### **Who are eligible to apply?**

To qualify for a USAID STRIDE-GraSST PSM Scholarship, you must:

- Preferably be a current graduate student pursuing a science and technology-related master's degree program in a Philippine university. *Consideration will also be given to outstanding recent university graduates who are endorsed by their university deans and interested in a university teaching career.*
- Have excellent Bachelor's and/or graduate records with the equivalent of at least 3.5 GPA (on a 4.0 scale)
- Preferably have completed at least two semesters of graduate study before September 2014
- Return to the Philippines immediately upon completion of study

As a PhD Dissertation Research Scholarship applicant, you must:

- Be enrolled in a science and technology-related PhD program in a Philippine university and have completed at least two-thirds (2/3) of the academic course requirements
- Have dissertation research topic approved at least by his/her thesis adviser.
- Have research work agreement with a U.S. university professor at the time of application

All scholarship applicants must be Filipino citizens living in the Philippines at the time of application (*U.S. citizens and permanent residents, and those living/working outside the Philippines are not eligible.*) You must also be proficient in English and in good health to do coursework or research in the U.S. In addition, you must return to the Philippines immediately after the end of your study or research.

### **What is the selection criteria and process?**

Scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis. As a PSM scholarship applicant, you will be assessed by a committee based on academic performance, professional experience, leadership qualities and community service, and the likelihood of finishing your master's degree.

Applications for dissertation research will be evaluated by a panel of leading members in the research community covering the sectors supported by USAID STRIDE. The following selection criteria will be taken into consideration:

- Academic merit
- Research ability
- Recommendations from referees
- Feasibility of the research study
- Significance and relevance of the proposed research
- Technical quality and scientific merit of the proposed research, i.e. how well the research problem is conceptualized and how well and appropriate the approaches/methods are described.
- Capacity and support of host university or academic advisor

### **STRIDE Graduate Scholarship Committee**

All STRIDE-GraSST applications will be reviewed and deliberated on by a committee/panel composed of the following:

- USAID STRIDE Chief of Party
- USAID STRIDE Faculty and Institutional Development Manager
- USAID Representative
- Philippine University Representative
- US University Representative
- Industry Sector Representative
- USAID STRIDE Advisory Board Member

### **USAID STRIDE-GraSST Scholarship Value and Inclusions**

Each PSM scholarship covers full tuition fees for a one academic year coursework, allowance for food, housing, books and instructional materials, health insurance and travel expenses.

PhD Dissertation Research scholarship covers travel expenses, food and housing, research fees and materials, and health insurance for a 12-month research study period at a U.S. university.

### **Applying for a USAID STRIDE-GraSST Scholarship**

To apply for a USAID STRIDE-GraSST scholarship, you must submit a USAID STRIDE-GraSST application form together with supporting documents within the application period which opens on 1 February 2014. PSM Scholarship applicants must submit their applications by **31 March 2014**. PhD Dissertation Research application period closes on **30 April 2014**.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

## What you need to submit for your application

- Completed application form
- Curriculum vitae
- Original or certified true copy of transcript of records for bachelor's and graduate degrees from all colleges/universities attended
- Three (3) letters of recommendation from current or past professors and work supervisors
- Endorsement letter from college dean (*for recent college students applying to PSM scholarships*)
- Personal statement essay (*for PSM scholarship applicants*)
- A full research proposal, including intellectual objectives and planned methodological and disciplinary work (*for PhD research scholarship applicants*)
- Letter of acceptance from the U.S. professor to conduct research at the university (*for PhD research scholarship applicants*)
- Philippine passport (*valid for at least two years at the time of application*)
- NBI Clearance (*acquired within four months before the start of the U.S. study*)

**Note:** GRE and TOEFL scores are not required at the time of application.

## How to complete your application

A complete application for USAID STRIDE-GraSST consists of the following:

- I. **APPLICATION FORM.** In this form, you will state biographical information, study/career goals, work experience, educational and other information. Please read all instructions carefully for every question. In addition, please review the following important information:
  - a. **Name** – It is important that you provide your name exactly as it appears (or will appear) on your passport.
  - b. **Institutions Attended** – Please list all post-secondary institutions attended in reverse order (putting the most recently attended first). Also include all institutions from which you did not achieve a degree.
  - c. **Future Plans** – In this section, you will describe your career goals and how your study/research in the U.S. will contribute to achieving your goals.
  - d. **University Preferences** – Please note that it is not expected that you will have U.S. university preferences. However, if you do, kindly refer to **Appendix A – US Universities with PSM Programs** in identifying your preferred universities. Please list the name of the university and its location, the department and specific program you are interested in, as well as the name and contact information of a faculty member you may have been in contact with. You may also provide other information pertinent in making your choices, e.g. climate, size of the institution, etc.
  - e. **U.S. University Research Professor Information** – It is preferred that as a PhD research applicant, you would have identified and started communicating to a U.S. university professor with whom you will partner for your research study. You must attach a **letter of acceptance or research agreement** signed by the host university professor indicating your partnership for your research study.
  - f. **PhD Dissertation Research Proposal** – As a PhD research scholarship applicant, you must attach your dissertation research proposal signed and approved by your thesis advisor.
  - g. **Personal Statement**–This is a narrative statement wherein you can describe your educational background, practical experience, special interests, career plans, and your purpose in applying for study in the U.S.
  - h. **GRE and TOEFL Scores** – If you have taken the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) within three years prior to your application, please provide your scores on each exam.
2. **SUPPLEMENTAL FORM**

**Letters of Reference/Recommendation.** You must have three letters of reference (or recommendation) submitted on your behalf. All letters of reference should be written by professors

under whom you have studied or pursued research, or by your current work supervisor in your field of study. At least one academic and one professional or work-related letter should be included. Please be certain to inform your referees that they will be receiving a recommendation request e-mail from USAID STRIDE.

### 3. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- a. **Transcript of Records.** You must attach official, complete and certified academic records covering the entire period of your study at colleges and universities. One certified official transcript of records from each university you attended, even those schools from which you did not receive a degree or diploma, is required. These transcripts should list the subjects you studied and the grades you received during each year of your enrollment.
- b. **Philippine Passport.** Please ensure that your passport is valid for at least two years at the time of application. You must send a scanned copy of the first page of your passport together with your application.
- c. **Endorsement Letter from the Dean.** For PSM Scholarship, we will also consider recent Bachelor's graduates (those who graduated in the last 12 months prior to the start of the U.S. University Fall Term) who have excellent Bachelor's records, endorsed by their college deans, and are interested in a university teaching career. If you recently earned your Bachelor's degree and are applying for the PSM Scholarship, you must attach an endorsement letter from your dean to your application.

#### Who to contact

Should you have any inquiries about GraSST, you may contact the USAID STRIDE Scholarship Manager at telephone nos. (63-2) 843.0787 / (63-2) 843.1081 or e-mail: [helpdesk@stride.rti.org](mailto:helpdesk@stride.rti.org).